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*Theodore Roosevelt*

*An Appreciation*

JOSEPH S. AUERBACH



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Theodore Roosevelt

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*An Appreciation*

BY

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THEODORE ROOSEVELT



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## *Theodore Roosevelt\**

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A REPUBLICAN gathering like this, Mr. Chairman, may seem a strange resort for a Democrat; and yet if gregariously inclined, what other kind of political meeting can he frequent unless the coming election turns out to be a landslide for the once accredited party to which I belong. An incident of which I was an amused spectator prompts me, however, not to dwell unduly on the misfortunes of what some facetious soul has termed that late party.

At a dinner of the New York State Branch of the Ohio Society, shortly after the last Presidential election, among the speakers were a Senator of the United States and Mr. Job Hedges. The Senator had referred in rather lachrymose terms to the recent calamity visited upon the Democratic party, and, as illustrative of his sad estate, read an irrelevant verse or two from Deuteronomy. When Mr. Hedges' turn came to speak, he announced his failure to understand the appropriateness of the Scriptural reference; and wondered, why if any Bible book must be quoted from on

\* Address at the Annual Dinner of the Nassau County Republican Club, October 27, 1922.

such an occasion, Exodus was not to be preferred to Deuteronomy!

Nevertheless, considering the fact that your meeting is primarily in commemoration of the birthday of Theodore Roosevelt, let me not regard myself as a Democrat among Republicans, but, according to the felicitous phrase of your Chairman, as a neighbor among neighbors, paying tribute to one of the commanding personalities in American life.

At the outset, however, let me say that I do not entertain views which, at times, seem to be required of one who presents himself as a so-called Roosevelt man. I am not here to indulge in adulation of him, since that would be an offense to his memory as well as to you. For I am one of those who think that he erred more than once by word and deed in his public life; that some of the things he did might with profit have been differently done, and some of the things said differently said; and, again, that some of the things said and done might better have never been said or done at all. His own frankness over his mistakes is conclusive proof that he would have no one claim infallibility for him. He never committed what Carlyle regarded as the greatest of faults, to be conscious of none. Vehement of utterance, he was more than once answerable to the charge of inconsistency, though we are to remember Emerson's injunction that a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.

Nor was he, uniformly, the persuasive advocate, failing, on occasions, to understand that ideas become



acceptable and current according to the time, place and circumstance of their presentation. Not always the apostle of reconciliation, he promoted opposition to some of his proposals because of the uncompromising and unhappy method whereby they were urged. At times, too, it would seem as if he adopted but the means of expediency to further the end desired, thereby detracting, in no small measure, from his repute and influence. Yet this is to be said defensively of him, that when his motives were tried in the court of his own conscience, he considered that there was no justification for criticism, much less for rebuke. Nor, knowing of his abhorrence of self-deception, may we lightly disregard this personal vindication of himself.

Any thought of his shortcomings, however, should not be determinative or even too influential in our estimate of him whom we honor to-day. For we are to judge individuals not alone by what unwisely they have done or failed to do, but by a knowledge of the extent to which the credits predominate over the debits, when the balance sheet of their accomplishment in life is made up for posterity.

Burns puts much of the true philosophy of reasonableness into the lines:

*What's done we partly may compute  
But know not what's resisted.*

Or, perhaps you would prefer to think of the unwisdom of Theodore Roosevelt, as sharing the same

gracious destiny accorded by Sterne to the oath of Uncle Toby:

“The avenging spirit which flew up to Heaven’s Chancery with the oath, blushed as he gave it in; and the recording Angel, as he wrote it down, dropped a tear upon the word and blotted it out forever.”

**I**N FACT, it will be a correct view if we realize that Theodore Roosevelt’s conceded greatness is, in no negligible manner, enhanced by the concession, that some of his utterances and acts were not unwarrantably the subject of censure. For when we appraise what he has left to us by way of word and deed, it must increasingly be realized that the American people have received from him, as from none other, the priceless legacy of an imperious summons to responsive citizenship.

Before referring, however, to the significance of this legacy, we may advantageously recall some of the distinguishing attributes of the man which made it possible for his life to be so appealingly rich in purpose and achievement.

Wholly without vanity, he had the rare virtue of candor which so often is a manifestation of distinction in character. He never wished to be canonized as “Sir Oracle.” Let me give you one or two illustrations of this trait in him.

When a candidate for the Governorship of the State of New York, he asked me to call at his headquarters, the old Fifth Avenue Hotel. On arrival there, I

learned that he wished to have my private secretary — a clever speaker and a Rough Rider — as one of his campaign orators. Of course, I assented, adding that inasmuch as the young man would probably go irrespective of my wishes, I might as well have the credit of letting him go. As we discussed this young man, Roosevelt inquired of me why, in view of his general ability, he had not made an independent success of life. After characterizing him as a rolling stone, I suggested that, inasmuch as it was the month of October when wise men went a-hunting, he might be classified as a rabbit dog. For a requested explanation of the epithet, I stated that now and then the most self-respecting game-bird dog, if a rabbit perchance had crossed the trail, would quit his professional job and forthwith go rabbit chasing. The comment, with the accompaniment of an engaging smile, was: "Well, I don't wish to consider that an insuperable defect in a man, for I'm a good deal of a rabbit dog myself."

Let me give you another instance of his candor, recounted to me by an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. When Roosevelt came to Washington as Vice-President, he called several times at the home of the Judge, who, by reason of exacting Court work, had overlooked the fact until attention was called to it by one of his household. The next morning he visited the Vice-President to express his regret; but Roosevelt demurred to any apology, explaining that he had called on quite a selfish errand

—to get advice as to a course of law study. The Judge, attracted by the suggestion, said that he would not only gladly recommend the proper books, but that — inasmuch as he never wrote opinions on Saturday evenings — he would be pleased if Roosevelt would then come to his house and be quizzed concerning the intervening reading. Roosevelt expressed himself as “delighted.”

The summer came, McKinley was shot, and Roosevelt became the President of the United States. Naturally, nothing further was done concerning the project.

In the November following, the Judge was requested to come to the White House one evening. On arrival there, Roosevelt was found with only a few intimates discussing an outline of his proposed message to Congress. On learning of the occasion for the invitation, the Judge insisted that he ought not to be present, inasmuch as by some possibility, some of the things to be said in the message might be the subject of judicial consideration later. Roosevelt urged that, in view of the extreme unlikelihood of this, the Judge remain; and against his judgment he consented. As the discussion proceeded, the impression made upon the Judge was that, in some particulars, the message would savor of unwisdom, both as to subject-matter and form. And, notwithstanding the general commendation, the Judge, importuned by Roosevelt to express himself, spoke briefly but emphatically of his misgivings and thereupon went away.

The message when it reached Congress, was of the most temperate character, in some respects quite different from that outlined in the interview; and the Judge thought no more of the matter, concluding that upon reflection Roosevelt of his own motion had decided upon the modification. The Judge later had the misfortune, as he expressed it, to attend a reception at the White House, where a happening, which afterwards became more or less public, enabled him to tell me of this episode. When he entered the room, the President, in characteristically summary manner elbowed a way to him; and seizing the hand of the Judge, and shaking it almost out of its socket, he waved his disengaged hand to those present and said something after this fashion: "Let me introduce you, not to one of the great Judges of the world but to a great man, who, when he knew of views in my proposed message to Congress, had the courage to prevent me from making what might have been a critical mistake."

The Judge's comment was, that few persons in such high official position would have felt at liberty to be equally candid; not only because of vanity but of solicitude lest the declaration might affect injuriously the prestige of the Chief Magistrate of the Nation.

He had no fear of gathering about him great men or of awarding praise where it was due. In fact, he had no fear upon any subject. It may be said of him as Mr. Root said of Mr. Choate:

"He was wholly free of any impediment of timid-

ity. This quality did not impress one as being the kind of courage which overcomes fear, but, rather, a courage which excluded fear. With him, no such emotion as fear seemed to exist."

He understood well the import of the lines of Shakespeare:

*To fear the foe, since fear oppresses strength,  
Gives in your weakness strength unto your foe,  
And so your follies fight against yourself.*

And Walt Whitman must have had in mind a Roosevelt when he chanted this stanza in *A Song of Joys*:

*O to struggle against great odds to meet enemies un-  
daunted!  
To be entirely alone with them, to find how much  
one can stand!  
To look strife, torture, popular odium face to face!  
To mount the scaffold, to advance to the muzzles of  
guns with perfect nonchalance!  
To be indeed a God!*

His characteristic courage was all-embracing, of the kind pictured by Emerson: the persuasion that he was here for cause, and assigned to this place by the Creator to do the work inspired in him. It was not merely that which sweeps men into combat under the proddings of fervor, or commits them to the advocacy of the popular movement. It was equally that unflinching resolve which compels pursuit of the worthy

idea, in the face of superciliousness, disparagement or even ruthless criticism. With the indomitable spirit of martyr and zealot, he undertook, so far as lay in his power, to see to it that neither arrogant wealth nor privilege should forbid merit to pass unchallenged through the door of opportunity. And his denunciation of the narrowness and selfishness of business and political life, calls to mind the rallying words of Samuel J. Tilden, in his attack upon corruption in high places: "I will lead where anyone shall dare to follow, and I will follow where anyone shall dare to lead."

He kept company with this, that and the other thing and person; with the man who hit hard with his fists; with the statesman, the politician, the scientist, the man of Letters; and he met them always on terms of equality. There was one, however, with whom he never kept company — the professional altruist; and among the things with which he never kept company were sham, hypocrisy, and pretense, in any of their forbidding and sinister forms. His walk was never a strut.

That he was the staunch enemy of physical, mental and spiritual slothfulness in life many of his utterances testify:

"I wish to preach, not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife; to preach that highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardships, or from



bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph.”

Sydney Smith says that Daniel Webster struck him as a locomotive in trousers; it would be difficult to imagine how the versatile and irrepressible clergyman would have pictured Theodore Roosevelt.

How many-sided, too, he was in resourceful information! There is to-day a new thought in the minds of both laymen and lawyers concerning the judicial province. We sometimes think of it as a mere thumbing of the volumes of the reports by the Judge, to find a precedent whereby alone the case before him is to be determined. This fortunately is scarcely the half truth, for the Judge under certain conditions must be a legislator in the highest sense. In a wonderfully illuminating book — *The Judicial Process*, by the distinguished Judge Benjamin N. Cardozo, of the Court of Appeals — which gathers together four Lectures delivered by him before the Yale Law School, I came across this:

“Nearer to the truth, and midway between these extremes, are the words of a man who was not a jurist, but whose intuitions and perceptions were deep and brilliant — the words of President Roosevelt in his message of December 8, 1908, to the Congress of the United States: “The chief lawmakers in our country may be, and often are, the judges, because they are the final seat of authority. Every time they interpret contract, property, vested rights, due process of law, liberty, they necessarily enact into law parts of a sys-



tem of social philosophy; and as such interpretation is fundamental, they give direction to all law-making. The decisions of the courts on economic and social questions depend upon their economic and social philosophy; and for the peaceful progress of our people during the twentieth century we shall owe most to those judges who hold to a twentieth century economic and social philosophy and not to a long outgrown philosophy, which was itself the product of primitive economic conditions."

It is not strange, therefore, that Judge Cardozo says Roosevelt's intuitions and perceptions were deep and brilliant; or that he adds:

"What am I that, in those great moments onward, the rush and sweep of forces, my petty personality should deflect them by a hairbreadth.

"Why should the pure light of truth be broken up and impregnated and colored with any element of my being? Such doubts and hesitations besiege one now and again. The truth is, however, that all these inward questionings are born of the hope and the desire to transcend the limitations which hedge our human nature. Roosevelt, who knew men, had no illusions on this score. He was not posing an ideal. He was not fixing a goal. He was measuring the powers and endurance of those by whom the race is to be run."

It would be at least superfluous for one to add anything by way of emphasis to this discriminating tribute.

HIS method of address was intelligible not only to the scholar and man of affairs but also to the man of the street; for his mind was a spacious, well-ordered habitation, with practical, communicable culture as one of its chief possessions. His vivid, rugged style was never rhetorical embellishment of the uttered thought, but its very substance and soul; for he was as incapable of any such vulgar offense as of decking himself out in gaudy raiment. He was rarely if ever trite, and must have been in complete accord with the thought of John Morley, that a platitude is not turned into a profundity by being dressed up as a conundrum. The oft-quoted maxim of Buffon, *Le style est l'homme même*, never had a more striking application than to Theodore Roosevelt. The inevitable word, the sententious, idiomatic, creative phrase, the brilliant, picturesque or homely illustration, the apt quotation and, last though by no means least, a saturation with the imagery and beauty and glory of the Bible vocabulary — without which the resourcefulness of the English language is lost to us — all enabled him to attain to a unique mastery over expression, which is so often mastery over men and mastery over opportunity.

He added marked dignity and increased power to every office he was called upon to fill. As Assemblyman of the State of New York, Civil Service Commissioner, Police Commissioner of the City of New York, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and as Governor of the State of New York, he invariably thought and

expressed himself nationally. His versatility was matched only by his fixity and persistence of purpose; and while filling out the term of McKinley, there was little or no doubt that he would be chosen as the candidate of his party at the approaching Republican National Convention.

**L**ET me now, after this brief reference to a part of his equipment for the delivery of his arresting message, consider its character and mighty import to the American people.

Upon his election as President of the United States — whereby his words and deeds which had been the subject of criticism, were condoned through an overwhelming popular endorsement — he came to consider himself the representative not of a party but of a whole people. And he continued until the end of his days, in high and low places — by language that was often abrupt and partaking little of conventionality — to preach not merely a valiant Americanism, but the admonishing gospel that we, in our day and generation, were steadily ignoring or even repudiating the compelling obligation we owe to our neighbor and the State, and so were inviting for ourselves retribution of the gods. He did not arrogate to himself the discovery of this obligation, but it can be justly claimed that he uncovered it; and though he gathered inspiration from the worthy men of our land and of other lands with whom such a conception was creed and

dogma, he made of it a working religion. True enough it is, too, that these other men, occupying often distinguished political position, exemplified in their life a vital recognition of this superior obligation; yet Roosevelt towers above them all as the personification of that recognition. And with unique appropriateness upon his memorial coat of arms might be the shining legend: *Non sibi sed patriae*, or "To order well the State."

In a review of Wells' creative *Future in America* I said:

"He (Wells) sees in the greedy acquisition of vast wealth and its vulgar display, and in the centralization and concentration of that wealth and of our organized industry within an increasingly few hands, more than the beginnings of the collapse of our much-vaunted individual competition and the equal opportunity for all. It is apparent to him that our economic process has begun to grind living men as well as inanimate matter; and he notes the ominous mutterings of a disapproval that will not be mute, even though it must speak with the economic jargon of the demagogue. It is no longer a case of our avoiding or stifling the debate, but of the substitution of wise counsels for intemperate utterance and for possibly intemperate acts. And by wise counsels is meant the introduction into our conceptions of national life, of many considerations which up to the present time we have ignored.

"All of us frequently hear expressions of surprise over the appearance of this disapproval, at a time

when the evidences of material prosperity confront us everywhere. Yet we must not forget that, fortunately, the American people think as well as eat; and it is a hopeful sign for the future that their consciences and intellects cannot be drugged with the full dinner pail.

“By this it is not meant to suggest that all or even the larger part of this disapproval is justified. For much of it is superficial or manufactured by men with evil or interested motives: much of it is full of crudities. Yet, when all this is said, it remains true that at the present time there is flowing through this and other lands a great stream of influence to which — according as men variously view the contributions it has received from many sources — they have applied the several names of ‘discontent,’ ‘unrest,’ ‘socialism,’ ‘humanitarianism,’ and a ‘great spiritual awakening.’ Whatever be its proper characterization, only our folly can persuade us that this influence in the world will disappear, or that it is wise for us to wish it to disappear. On the contrary, if indications count for anything, it gains in depth and volume as it sweeps on, and threatens to undermine the foundations of many things whose security we have until now regarded as beyond menace. Nor, as some think, can its current be dammed; for through or over any obstruction placed in its way, it would be likely one day to rush with disastrous consequences. Nevertheless, what appears to many of us merely as a meaningless or destructive agency can be utilized for good. For

just as men by directing the course of mighty rivers into countless channels have turned deserts into fertile lands, so we, with this influence, can perhaps restore to usefulness the places in our national life — laid waste by selfishness, neglect, and the lack of regard for those things which concern the general welfare.”

Surely some like thought was in the mind of Theodore Roosevelt — as in that of Wells — even though he doubtless understood that, in a distinct way, he was promoting unrest by his uncompromising reproof and warning. This gospel of a finer citizenship became to him not so much a possession as an obsession; and to it we can have profitable recourse as difficulties thicken before us in our national life. And unless we are steeped in aspirations such as he voiced, for the guiding principle of progress, we cannot justifiably believe that our Country can even grope its way through those difficulties. He had an abiding faith in our great adventure of Republican Government, only if, by taking counsel of the old virtues, we were made aware of the treacherous places which lay between the start and the goal. And the political and economic heresy, of which he was not infrequently accused, would to his way of thinking be the political and economic faith of to-morrow.

Nor can it be justifiably asserted that he erred in dissenting from much of the existing order — without always indicating clearly the judicious substitute or even by advising temporarily the impracticable substitute. Like the wise physician, he disclosed to us,

in unambiguous terms, our besetting ailments, to the end that we might understand how restoration to civic health depended upon conformity to the general counsels of wisdom. If not in sympathy with Brown-ing's "All's right with the world," he held steadfast to the thought that all will be right with the world, only if the principle upon which that order must be readjusted was through the corrective influence of love of country. We were to call a halt in our so-called progress because we had lost the true path; and upon returning to the abandoned ways, must resume the march with such new impulse and new resolve, as would forbid or at least not invite a repetition of our error.

He never indulged himself in jeremiads or vain regrets. By impassioned speech, in association with the saving grace of wit and humor, he manifested the exhilaration of the work to which he was dedicated. He knew next to nothing of the forlorn hope, if the flag he followed were upheld by standard bearers who might not faint. And if his words betrayed no reconciliation with modern-day apathy towards State duty, we must remember that he was no lackadaisical Parlor Socialist, but regarded himself as not only the leader of an assault against the fortified places where greed and insolence and ignorance lay entrenched, but as the herald of a new dawn in civic righteousness. Yet like the prophet of old he would say to us: "Keep the munition, watch the way, make the loins strong, fortify the power mightily."



Undoubtedly he might have presented even his trenchant views with more of the amenities of debate; but, in his judgment, often the mere ceremonious plea would not suffice. We must take Theodore Roosevelt as we find him, with the virtue and vices of the deliverance of his message; but no one can read understandingly the record of his life and not feel that, according to his conviction — and we should be quite unfair in failing to give this consideration due weight — the method employed was essential for the presentation of his cause. And though at times he was accused of insincerity, no critic worthy the name has ever had the hardihood to assert or suggest that to this momentous question of loyalty to ourselves and of homage to our Country he did not make the quickening contribution of a great heart and a great mind and a great soul. Intolerant of Laodicean attitude of mind or temperament; of mere lip service by way of flag cheering, or overwrought sentimentality, he would have his appeal be as a clarion Call to the Colors. Above all things the fervid spirit and an unswerving fortitude constituted for him the very touchstone of patriotism.

His life may be summarized in a paragraph: He never claimed to have conformed unflinchingly to the counsels of perfection or the decrees of a timid convention; but with vows and girded loins, his impulse was ever for progression toward ennobling ends. He was the irreconcilable foe of corrupting ease and of self with its consuming love, which leaves no soil



wherein brave deeds may root. He made no journeyings to the land of Vanity Fair. At the bar of public opinion, he arraigned, as equal in guilt, affronting capital and labor truculent with weaponed threats; and coupled together in ignominy, the Pharisaical creed of the pew and the shiftiness of the market place. He warned us, as did Horace the Roman people, of dust-laden and unvisited altars of the gods, where irreverence had forgot to kneel. He inveighed against the reckless harvesting of the fields of opportunity by greed or unconcern, lest the promise of even gleanings there be denied to industry and thrift. He exalted the right, as understanding of its varying import was vouchsafed to him; and, in the words of the Apocrypha, he was among those who feared the Lord and would kindle Justice as a light. His conception of service to the State was a religion, and his private life was unsullied by the breath of scandal. He never counted the cost of warfare with unworthiness; and, when the end came, he looked unafraid into the face of Death — his only conqueror.

*The seas all cross'd, weather'd the capes, the voyage done.*

Slight wonder that it was given to him, as Matthew Arnold said it had been given to a genius of Letters, to come at last to sleep

*Under the wings of Renown.*

NOW, what do we purpose doing with this legacy he has transmitted to us? Are we but aimlessly to declaim concerning it or are we to put it out at interest so that abundant profit shall result?

Admittedly we are compassed about by ominous problems. I am not given over to pessimism; and if ever indicted for such a transgression, I am sure that the record of my thoughts will ensure my acquittal. Yet I have not that kind of optimism which a man was said to have who, falling from a twentieth story window and on his way to instant death, murmured as he passed the fourth or fifth story: "Well, nothing has happened yet!" A noted American author has said something to the effect that a pessimist is one who has had the misfortune to live overmuch with optimists; and may we take the thought to heart, without chance of forgetfulness, that there is a criminal optimism abroad in the land.

True though it be that the records of history bear witness to our almost inexhaustible resourcefulness when exposed to perturbing dangers, and give us a hope that the outcome will not be disheartening now, this hope, if reasonable, must be allied to unremitting watchfulness and unfaltering effort. Great as is the accomplishment of our Country, it is mere vanity for us to regard ourselves as immune from the dangers of tendencies to be checked and of problems to be solved. And if thus unwise, we must be content to witness the impairment of our obvious mission as a

nation — destined, perhaps, to express the final judgment of mankind as to the experiment of a democracy.

Emerson, optimist though he was, voices these misgivings as he contemplates the future: "The spread eagle must fold his foolish wings and be less of a peacock." And then he adds:

"In this country, with our practical understanding there is, at present, a great sensualism, a headlong devotion to trade and to the conquest of continent — to each man as large a share of the same as he can carve for himself — an extravagant confidence in our talent and activity, which becomes, whilst successful, a scornful materialism, but with the fault, of course, that it has no depth, no reserved force to fall back upon when a reverse comes."

Matthew Arnold, speaking with the authority of a thoughtful observer and kindly critic, in *Numbers*, one of his American addresses — by which he wished to be remembered more than by any of his other prose productions — says:

"And the philosophers and the prophets, whom I at any rate am disposed to believe, and who say that moral causes govern the standing and the falling of states, will tell us that the failure to mind whatsoever things are elevated must impair with an inexorable fatality the life of a nation, just as the failure to mind whatsoever things are just, or whatsoever things are amiable, or whatsoever things are pure, will impair it; and that if the failure to mind whatsoever things are elevated should be real in your American

democracy, and should grow into a disease, and take firm hold on you, then the life of even these great United States must inevitably suffer and be impaired more and more, until it perish."

Let us not deceive ourselves. We are drifting steadily away in this country from representative government to an irresponsible democracy; and if we permit that drifting to persist we shall find ourselves upon the rocks or the shallows. Or, to drop the figure of speech, if we tolerate a continuance of these pernicious conditions we invite the rule of the mob — a benevolent mob, it may be — but the mob nevertheless. Already the Crowd, the standard-bearer and vanguard of the mob, has appeared.

We have particularly in our populous cities accentuated menaces. The doors of a foolish hospitality were indiscriminately flung wide open to the people of earth, since we wished to be big in population as we were big in territory. Nor was it essential for us to subscribe any R. S. V. P. to our invitation; for we knew in advance that there would be no niggardly acceptance of it. We need not, ought not, however, to characterize these people by opprobrious names; rather let us call them The Many. But it can be said of them, without any offense to the wiser of these people themselves, that, as a rule they have no conception — scarcely even a notion — of the significance of citizenship.

Yet there is another group of The Many at the other extreme, equally without such conception, and

more blameworthy by reason of their advantages of birth and station. Born and reared within the confines of the Republic, they have expatriated themselves in the land of Devil-Careedom. They know next to nothing of the exhilarating music of the Union, to which they might keep valiant, rhythmic step, but seem content with the servitude of degrading jazz. Moreover, in that land of Devil-Careedom prevails a loathsome disease — the contagious itch for notoriety and vulgarity — which so invariably corrupt the public well-being. Not a few there have contracted the disease; and the best to be said of the immune among them is, that they are afflicted with what Wells terms State blindness.

In between these two extremes populated by The Many, dwell those appreciative of the gravity of the situation, who would demonstrate their capacity to be fit guardians of the integrity of our institutions. Yet we cannot arrogate to ourselves credit for such virtue except by setting an example which should persuade these others of their remissness and dereliction. Nor, to this end, must we ever forget that individualism, laudable as it is, depends for its vindication upon our taking counsel together of revealed wisdom as well as of tradition. One supreme virtue Theodore Roosevelt would inculcate in us, was that co-operation as well as reconsecration to ideals was imperatively required of us; and that recompense to the worthiest purpose and utterance and conduct must necessarily be meagre, unless the hands of our endeavor are joined

in the grip of a common interest. And if our thought be that even such endeavor would be unavailing, we have but to remind ourselves how, again and again, history has been at pains to record for us the reassuring precedent to the contrary. For always to the prudent few, when aroused and disciplined, we can confidently appeal for deliverance from error. Let us, as illustrative of this thought, recall that quickening Bible story of the twice-sifted army of Gideon.

Over against Gideon and his army was the host of the Midianites; and he was not even confident of the issue of the coming battle. He asked, therefore, for this sign from the Lord: that if in the evening he spread out a fleece of wool, in the morning the earth about the fleece should be dry and the fleece of wool wet with dew. The sign was given him, and the story says that the next morning he "wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water." Yet he wished further to be reassured, and for the next morning he asked that the fleece which he was again to spread out should be dry and the earth about it wet. Again it was as he had asked, and now he was prepared to lead the attack; but the Lord said that the army must first be sifted so as to know of its courage. Therefore He told Gideon to offer to all those that were "fearful or afraid" the choice to depart, and more than a score of thousands went their way. Once more Gideon was ready to give battle, but the Lord required now that the army be sifted again to learn of its prudence. Ac-

cordingly he was directed to take those that remained to the water, and try them there by the manner of their drinking; and all those who bowed upon their knees to the water, thoughtless of the danger before them, were to be put aside, and only those who caught the water in their hands and lapped of it, as "a dog lappeth of water," with eyes to the front and on the foe, were to be chosen to answer to the roll-call. Then though but three hundred remained, these tried men went forth and prevailed.

**S**TILL another menacing condition confronting us is our indifference to a salutary public opinion, proceeding almost wholly from a flouting of civic responsibility. I am not speaking of public opinion as to the approaching election, as to whether we are to have more snow this winter than we had last winter, or as to the probable winner of the next prize fight. I have in mind that public opinion, to which the Courts are attaching a determining importance in the construction of statutes enacted by State legislatures. I have not the time to refer in detail to this, nor would you, perhaps, have the inclination to listen to me. Let me, nevertheless, at least say to you, that the Supreme Court of the United States has held that a State legislature, if it acts in good faith, which can scarcely ever be impugned, can enact into a so-called Emergency Statute that which it conceives — to quote the somewhat undeterminative phraseology of the Court itself — "is sanctioned by usage, or held by the pre-



vailing morality or strong and preponderant opinion to be greatly and immediately necessary to the public welfare." And the Courts may not interfere with the legislative mandate.

We continue to talk glibly of our Federal Constitution as the "bulwark and palladium of liberty," and in other overwrought phrases. But it will be well for us to remember that the Emergency Statute suspends the operation of the Constitution, not in some of its negligible, but in its most vital provisions. It suspends for the life of the Statute the Due Process Clause, which guarantees to you and me the right to liberty and the right to property; and it suspends another vital provision that a State may not pass a law impairing the obligation of a contract. In a very real sense our Constitution exists only on sufferance of the State Legislature. It is quite idle to talk of persuading the Court to modify this frequently announced view as to the Emergency Statute; for the effort would be as futile as the attempt to take a modern-day citadel with a shot gun.

Accordingly, we must have in this country, as never before, a vigilant, anxious public opinion that will not be denied a hearing. Yet as to what kind of public opinion we have, I do not ask you to accept any statement of mine, but that of one of our notable educators and of a discriminating though loyal English friend of our institutions.

Says Prof. J. E. Woodbridge of Columbia University:



“We do not know what public opinion really is or who really supports it. It is so uninformed and disorganized, so lacking in real leadership, so unsupported by disciplined thought that almost any well-conducted propaganda can seize upon it and temporarily control it to almost any end.”

Says Mr. H. W. Nevinson in his *Farewell to America*:

“Good-bye to the weary platitude, accepted as wisdom’s latest revelation! Good-bye to the docile audiences that lap rhetoric for sustenance! Good-bye to politicians contending for aims more practical than principles! Good-bye to Republicans and Democrats, distinguishable only by mutual hatred! Good-bye to the land where Liberals are thought dangerous and Radicals show red — where Mr. Gompers is called a Socialist, and Mr. Asquith would seem advanced! A land too large for concentrated indignation; a land where wealth beyond the dreams of British profiteers dwells, dresses, gorges, and luxuriates, emulated and unashamed! I am going to a land of politics violently divergent; a land where even Coalitions cannot coalesce — where meetings break up in turbulent disorder, and no platitude avails to soothe the savage breast; a land fierce for personal freedom, and indignant with rage for justice; a land where wealth is taxed out of sight, or for very shame strives to disguise its luxury; a land where an ancient order is passing away, and leaders whom you call extreme are hailed by Lord

Chancellors as the very fortifications of security.  
 Good-bye, America! I am going home.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Good-bye to the indiscriminating appetite which gulps lectures as opiates, and ‘printed matter’ as literature! Good-bye to the wizards and witches who ask to psychoanalyze my complexes, inhibitions, and silly dreams! Good-bye to the exuberant religious or fantastic beliefs by which unsatisfied mankind still strives desperately to penetrate beyond the flaming bulwarks of the world! Good-bye, Americans! I am going to a land very much like yours. I am going to your spiritual home.”

Who would be so foolish as not to recognize, as do Prof. Woodbridge and Mr. Nevinson and many others, that we to-day are under the domination of the Crowd?

Then, too, one of the things of which we like to boast is our so-called American idealism; but it is a grave question whether, as a rule or even in great emergencies, we accommodate ourselves by conduct to our declamation. How can we doubt this, when, if quite frank, we must confess that, due to infirmity of purpose, even the covenant made with ourselves, on entering the Great War, as to a finer citizenship, has not been kept in spirit or even in letter? With private individuals as well as with those representing us in high political places, are not contention and partisanship, and those trivial, cheap concerns of life to which we are so much given over, among the counts in an

indictment of our rhetorical patriotism? We seem at times of the notion that prating of our political virtues is proof of their existence, whereas, on the contrary, it is often relevant testimony tending to establish the falsity of any such claim. And, to understand how permanent must be the memory of Theodore Roosevelt, we have but to realize that every one of the failures on our part to live true to that covenant, is rebuked after no uncertain fashion, by his unbraiding fearlessness and inspiring life.

**I**F THEN, we are to organize for our councils we must have someone to preside over us in the chair of authority. The chair has been long vacant, we must agree. Not that we have not had and do not still have in political, social and business life, men of notable and enduring achievements, whose names are a synonym of fealty to the State; but no one of them, as I have said, represents an approach in this respect to what Roosevelt stands for in popular esteem, or could fill that chair so acceptably as he.

Your presiding officer, Mr. Cocks, and Dean Treder, and myself were just now reminding ourselves how all gatherings where the words and deeds of Theodore Roosevelt are recounted, seem pervaded by his spiritual presence. Does it not seem to you that it is here with us this evening? And as illustrative of my thought concerning the rightful occupancy of that chair, let me recall to you some lines from Longfellow, who,



though not always the poet of inspiration often says quickening things, which will live on both for their poetic beauty as well as nobility of thought. In a noted poem he is portraying Burns, as one whose "hand guides every plow"; whose "voice is in each ingle-nook, each rustling bough." To Longfellow Burns was Scotland and Scotland was Burns, just as Roosevelt, in himself, was the personification of love of country. And at the end of the poem Longfellow, in moving words, has this greeting for Burns:

*His presence haunts this room to-night,  
A Form of mingled mist and light  
From that far coast.  
Welcome beneath this roof of mine!  
Welcome! this vacant chair is thine,  
Dear guest and ghost!*

Let us think of such an invitation as extended, for another purpose than hospitality, to Theodore Roosevelt. And when the chair is thus occupied, are we to be indifferent listeners to the exhortation of his life? Shall we, like Felix of old, when reasoned with concerning righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, merely tremble and then add: "Go thy way, when I have a more convenient season I will call for thee?" A thousand times a thousand times, let us fervently pray that this be not so.

Some of you have not had the experience of being born in the country. Some of you are too young even to know of the Protracted Meeting — where, when

the time for exhortation came, the Anxious Seat was set aside for those who had evinced a desire to seek the so-called salvation of the forbidding orthodoxy of yesterday. What we need to-day, however, is to sit in a new Anxious Seat, for the purpose of embracing that political salvation of which Theodore Roosevelt was privileged to be the nobly commissioned exponent. And may we, through communion with his chief article of faith in public life, learn by heart, in more than one way, these impelling lines from *Measure for Measure*, which were an injunction for the government of the State and which he so well interpreted by his aspirations and career:

*Thyself and thy belongings  
Are not thine own so proper as to waste  
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.  
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,  
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues  
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike.  
As if we had them not. .Spirits are not finely touched  
But to fine issues.*

I SAID a few moments since that Theodore Roosevelt sleeps under the wings of Renown; and he will continue to sleep there, irrespective of what we may do or fail to do in his honor. Yet this further thought occurs to me. Although many orthodox beliefs have, with time, fallen away from us, one survives, even among men of science as well with the poets and

philosophers, that, in the hereafter, conscious existence may well be the recompense to a creative life. And — if we make manifest and vocal in our lives his passionate love of country, and cause his vision of a regenerate citizenship to become for us a reality and sure possession — we can, without any approach to intellectual humiliation, conceive of him in some spirit abode, as witnessing the seeds he had sowed quickened into an abundant and abiding harvest for the good of the State, and as knowing that he does sleep

*Under the wings of Renown.*

Shall we not, by faith and devotion and sacrifice build such a monument to his memory and to the Republic?

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